

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8971

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: INTERNAL POLITICS -CABINET CHANGES CLARIFIED

REF: BRUSSELS 6051

1. TEXT OF PALACE ANNOUNCEMENT PUBLISHED 23 OCTOBER CLARIFIED
REDISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCIES WITHIN CABINET
BUT EMBASSY IS INFORMED THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH-
IN GOVERNMENT CONTINUE AND CHANGES MAY STILL BE MADE.

2. CONTRARY TO INFORMATION REPORTED REFTEL, STATE SECRETARY
FOR FLEMISH INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM RAMAEKERS
(SOCIALIST), NOT SENATOR VAN BOGAERT, REPLACED ANSEELE AS
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS. RAMAEKERS ALSO ASSUMED
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RESPONSIBILITY FOR HARBOR POLICY FORMERLY HELD BY FAYAT; HIS

NEW TITLE: MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND HARBOR POLICY.
SENATOR VAN BOGAERT REPLACED RAMAEKERS AS STATE SECRETARY
FOR FLEMISH INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. CHANGES
IN TITLES AND (IN PARENTHESIS) COMPETENCIES OF FOLLOWING CABINET
MEMBERS INDICATES REDISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN
GOVERNMENT:

DE CLERCQ - VICE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE (IN
CHARGE OF FOREIGN TRADE);

DE SAEGER-MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND FAMILY
POLICY;

HANIN- MINISTER FOR SCIENCE POLICY (IN CHARGE OF EASTERN CANTONS
AND TOURISM);

CUDELL - MINISTER FOR BRUSSELS AFFAIRS (IN CHARGE OF DEVELOPMENT
AID);

FALIZE - MINISTER OF FRENCH CULTURE (IN CHARGE OF PLANNING AND
HOUSING IN WALLONIA);

OLIVER - MINISTER FOR MIDDLE CLASSES (IN CHARGE OF FRANCOPHONE
INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM);

GRAFE - MINISTER FOR WALLONIAN AFFAIRS;

DHOORE - STATE SECRETARY FOR FLEMISH REGIONAL ECONOMY, HOUSING
AND PLANNING.

3. CABINET THUS COMPRISES 22 MINISTERS AND 6 STATE SECRETARIES,
LINGUISTIC PARITY IS MAINTAINED, AND THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE
IN RELATIVE REPRESENTATION OF PARTIES.

4. COMMENT. CONFUSION OVER CABINET CHANGES AND
COMPETENCIES OF ITS MEMBERS HAS NOT ENHANCED PUBLIC
IMAGE OF PRIME MINISTER, HIS GOVERNMENT, OR PARTIES
INVOLVED. TYPICAL REACTION IS PRESS ARTICLE THAT STATES,
"SELDOM HAS ONE SEEN ANYTHING SO BIZZARE (AS THE ASSIGNMENT
OF COMPETENCIES)... THE DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS, FROM THE
VERY MOMENT IT WAS ANNOUNCED, WAS ALREADY IN QUESTION -
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TO THE POINT OF REQUIRING A FURTHER GOVERNMENTAL SUMMIT TO
AGREE UPON THE WORK OF THE LAST." PROBLEM, CVP OFFICIAL TOLD
EMBOFF, LAY IN SOCIAL CHRISTIANS'DISSATISFACTION WITH FACT
THAT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AID
WERE NOT GIVEN EITHER TO FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE OR TO
OTHER SOCIAL CHRISTIAN MINISTERS, AND THAT MINISTER GRAFE
NOT ONLY ACQUIRED NO NEW RESPONSIBILITIES BUT WAS DEPRIVED OF
HIS TITULAR POSITION OF

DEPUTY MINISTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT. OFFICIAL
SAID FURTHER "CLARIFICATION" OF TITLES AND FUNCTIONS MIGHT BE
REQUIRED.
STRAUZ-HUPE

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